



**Concordia**  
UNIVERSITY

Centre for  
Teaching and  
Learning Services

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**CTLS  
ANNUAL REPORT  
2004 - 2005**

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## Executive summary

The Centre for Teaching and Learning Services (CTLS) plays a key role in supporting achievement of the goals established in Challenge 4 of the University's Academic Plan. This report summarizes the main activities of the Centre for the budgetary year 2004 to 2005 that emphasize excellence in teaching and learning.

In regard to **administration of the University's course evaluation** system, all four Faculties and CUPFA are now on board using the new scannable forms. Questionnaires and statistical reports represent the explicit requests of the Deans. IITS has developed an in-house system to calculate statistical reports accessible to professors via their MyConcordia portal. The Vice-Provost, Academic Programs, has established a Course Evaluation Committee to examine the current system with a focus on the manner in which course evaluation can facilitate meeting the University's academic goals.

**Supporting newly hired professors** in becoming effective teachers continues to be a top priority of the Centre. This is achieved through coordinating new faculty orientation sessions and hosting a social luncheon for new faculty. Follow-up telephone calls are also made to offer help to professors who may be experiencing challenges in their teaching or in the preparation of their teaching dossiers.

Strengthening our core **teaching development services for full-time and part-time professors** continues to be the Centre's main activity. Over the past year, we conducted 57 individual consultations on specific teaching issues; 27 university-wide faculty development workshops with a total of 224 participants; 2 intensive one-week course design and teaching workshops in collaboration with colleagues from McGill University in which 25 professors participated; 11 customized departmental workshops on such topics as developing assessment criteria and the pedagogical uses of PowerPoint; and 3 special events with invited speakers from outside of Concordia.

Another important role of the Centre is to ensure **graduate teaching assistants** understand their responsibilities in facilitating student learning. A one-day event designed specifically for new TA's is offered each year, nearly 200 attended in 2004. A new offering this year is a **seminar in university teaching for Ph.D. students**. Thirty-four students have received a certificate of achievement from our first two seminars.

Providing access to **online teaching resources** is a growing priority for the Centre. The CTLS website is an important vehicle for busy faculty members to access teaching resources at their own leisure. It is gradually developing into a showcase for promoting innovative practices and teaching excellence at Concordia.

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# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 About this report**

This annual report summarizes the main activities of the Centre for Teaching and Learning Services (CTLS) for the budgetary year 2004 to 2005, and lays ground for planning and resource allocation for the coming years. We seek feedback on our services from the Provost, the Vice-Provost Academic, the Deans, Department Chairs, Directors of service units that impact on the work of the Centre, and the CTLS Advisory Board (that includes representatives from CUFA and CUPFA).

## **1.2 The role of the Centre**

The Centre's mandate is to encourage and support the evaluation and improvement of teaching and learning at Concordia. The CTLS thus plays a key role in supporting achievement of the goals established in Challenge 4 of the University's Academic Plan. The Centre emphasizes excellence in teaching and learning in the following ways:

- Supporting the administration of the university's course evaluation system that is the primary means of tracking the overall teaching performance of full-time and part-time professors.
- Supporting newly hired professors in becoming effective teachers through an orientation for new faculty, a social luncheon, and follow-up telephone consultations.
- Making remedial teaching services available to professors experiencing challenges that includes one-on-one consultations and classroom observations.
- Promoting the reflective and innovative use of instructional technology through our technology-based workshops and consultations.
- Supporting full-time and part-time professors through our faculty development workshop series and online teaching resources.
- Introducing new teaching assistants to their roles and responsibilities in facilitating student learning through a one-day orientation and workshop series for TA's.
- Offering a seminar in university teaching for Ph.D. students.
- Offering customized workshops for departments on specific teaching issues.
- Keeping up-to-date on university pedagogy and practice, which involves focusing on current priorities, e.g., student retention, and comparing our services with other comprehensive universities across Canada.

## 2 Course Evaluation

CTLS is charged with supporting the administration of the University's course evaluation system. Activities over the past year have resulted in the following outcomes:

- All four Faculties and CUPFA are now on board using the new scannable system.
- Questionnaires and statistical reports represent the explicit requests of the Deans.
- IITS developed an in-house system to calculate statistical reports accessible to faculty via their MyConcordia portal.
- Faculty and Sector aggregates, percentile rankings, and individual customized reports (by course level and class size) are now available.
- The Centre has developed guidelines on how to access and interpret data <http://teaching.concordia.ca/evaluation>.
- Challenges with the new CE system have been communicated to the Provost.

Course evaluation data plays a key part of promotion and hiring decisions for faculty positions; we are keenly aware of the need to establish trust in the statistical data themselves, as well as to promote active engagement in the formative processes required to develop faculty into excellent teachers. In August 2005, the Vice-Provost Academic established a Course Evaluation Committee. The goal of the committee is to examine the current evaluation system with a focus on the manner in which course evaluation can facilitate meeting the University's academic goals, and to make recommendations for improvement. The committee's work will result in a series of reports to the Provost.

## 3 Teaching Development Services

Strengthening our core teaching development services continues to be the Centre's main activity. Over the past academic year we have done this in a number of ways.

### **3.1 New faculty orientation**

In 2004, we customized new faculty orientations in collaboration with each of the four Faculties:

- ENCS offered a one-day orientation that included a talk by the Dean, a presentation by CTLS on teaching skills, a panel discussion with experienced ENCS faculty, a session on the code of academic conduct and a hands-on session on using technology.

- FA invited their new faculty to a half-day orientation that included a presentation by CTLS, presentations from services within FA, a panel discussion with experienced faculty members, and a discussion with the Dean.
- JMSB invited all new faculty including ETA's and LTA's to a one-day orientation to university teaching that included a talk by the Dean and the Associate Dean, an interactive session on teaching by CTLS, and a panel discussion with experienced JMSB faculty.
- A&S organized their own orientation that addressed both teaching and research, to which the Director of CTLS was invited to make a brief presentation on teaching services available to new faculty.

This year, the Provost requested that new faculty orientation return to its original format. It now comprises a morning university-wide session to introduce key people and services and an afternoon Faculty-specific session. A&S is taking a broad-based approach to the afternoon session. The other Faculties are collaborating closely with the Centre to emphasize excellence in teaching.

What is needed is a comprehensive orientation handbook that promotes the University working as a community towards the same goals.

### ***3.2 New faculty luncheon***

In April of each year, CTLS organizes a social luncheon for new faculty members so they may connect with colleagues from across the University. This luncheon provides the opportunity for them to share their first year experiences and discuss any issues with the Provost. It also provides the Centre with the opportunity to elicit feedback on their perceived needs. Thirty-five faculty members participated this year.

### ***3.3 New faculty follow-up***

A paper-based survey was distributed during the new faculty luncheon this year. Thirty-three questionnaires were completed – A&S (21), ENCS (10), and JMSB (2). We can draw positive conclusions on the feedback about our current services: all those who had attended a workshop organized by the Centre said that they would recommend us to a colleague, and considerable interest in consultations and our upcoming workshop series was expressed.

The primary challenges of teaching, according to respondents, are: motivating students, maintaining student attention, and teaching to a range of levels (multi-level teaching). These topics are addressed, in part, by our workshop series, and form the basis of good pedagogical practice. We are offering a workshop in December 2005 on encouraging student retention that will specifically address these issues.

Most new faculty expressed satisfaction with their latest course evaluations. However, some were clearly unsatisfied, and some were unsure on how to interpret them. We are following up with professors who may be experiencing challenges in their teaching and developing Web-based resources to help with the interpretation of evaluation results. We are also telephoning all new faculty hired since 2003 to offer them help in the preparation of their teaching dossiers.

### **3.4 Individual consultations**

We have extended our confidential one-on-one consultation service to cover a specific range of teaching issues. The options currently available are:

- classroom observation (with videotaping)
- presentation skills (including voice projection for non-native speakers of English)
- course evaluation interpretation
- course design
- mid-course feedback
- teaching dossier
- technology (course website review and PowerPoint in teaching)

Fifty-seven consultations were conducted over the past year. Table 1 shows the breakdown by Faculty and issues addressed. These figures represent the number of individuals who engaged in this service. Each individual might have been the subject of several meetings, phone conversations, classroom observations, e-mail exchanges - sometimes over the course of several months. Consultation services represent a high time investment, but can affect great changes and development in individual teachers. The time investment required of professors, along with the reflective and personal nature of the work means that we anticipate the numbers of individual consultations to remain reasonably low.

**Table 1: Statistics on individual consultations for 2004-2005**

Issue	Faculty				Total
	A&S	ENCS	FA	JSMB	
Course evaluation	12	5	3	5	25
Course design	6	1	2	2	11
Teaching dossier	6	3			9
Technology	3	1		3	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>57</b>

In order to fulfill Challenge 4 of the Provost's Academic Plan "to upgrade the remedial teaching services made available to its professors", we need consensus on what should

trigger remedial teaching services, as well as what these services should comprise. One goal of the Course Evaluation Committee is to define excellent teaching and to make recommendations on the use of course evaluation data by administrators and committees. We propose that all new faculty members be encouraged to visit CTLS for an analysis of their teaching evaluations. We further recommend that teaching dossiers require classroom observations by a CTLS teaching consultant and the department Chair or another faculty member appointed by the Chair. CTLS can provide instructions and when required training on peer observation.

### ***3.5 University-wide workshop series***

Faculty development workshops are the Centre's traditional mode of delivering pedagogical training. They bring together teachers from all disciplines to learn from education specialists and from each other.

- A total of 27 university-wide workshops were offered during the reporting period, with a total of 224 participants. A complete list of workshops and participation statistics by Faculty is provided in Appendix A.
- Participation has decreased slightly from last year due to IITS no longer offering workshops through CTLS.
- Written feedback from participants indicates satisfaction with our workshops.

After consulting with a faculty member from JMSB's Marketing Department, we have made the following changes to our workshop series to try and boost participation:

- production of a professionally designed flyer;
- advertising workshops for the entire academic year rather than twice a year in order to provide faculty members increased planning time; and
- offering registration on a demand-led "cohort" basis so that faculty can express their interest in a particular topic and we will arrange a convenient date and time as soon as 6 people have registered. If fewer than 6 people register then they will be contacted for individual or small group consultations. The topics included on a cohort basis are: course design; integrating stories in your teaching; making the most of your course website; making the most of the Smart Room; learning by Blog; and community-based service learning.

### ***3.6 Course design and teaching workshop***

A new initiative this year has been to offer an intensive five-day Course Design and Teaching Workshop (CDTW). It is a hands-on event that leads faculty through a principled-approach to course design, culminating in a new course or the revision of a



current one; a detailed course syllabus; and a plan for implementing new teaching strategies, including learning technologies.

The first CDTW was held August 23-27, 2004, and the second May 26 to June 01, 2005. Twenty-five professors have participated with extremely positive reviews. Follow-up support is provided as faculty implement their new or revised course designs. Six participants from the first cohort met five times over the academic year to discuss implementation of their new course designs. The group will meet one more time with the next cohort.

The CDTW is a core faculty development workshop designed by colleagues at McGill University and Simon Fraser University. It is intended for faculty wanting to learn in more depth the effect that course design decisions can have on student learning. The Centre has collaborated in the implementation of this workshop at Concordia as part of an SSHRC research grant held by Drs. Amundsen, Weston, Abrami, & McAlpine titled: *A faculty development approach that focuses on learning for the effective integration of technology in higher education*. Funding from the grant will no longer be available next year.

### **3.7 Customized departmental workshops**

The Centre has been collaborating with various departments to provide customized workshops. Over the reporting period, we conducted 11 departmental workshops:

- Sociology (assessment criteria and interpreting course evaluations);
- Applied Human Science (assessment criteria);
- Studio Art (assessment criteria);
- Theology (assessment criteria and interpreting course evaluations);
- Journalism (instructional skills);
- Geography (pedagogical uses of PowerPoint);
- Accountancy (pedagogical uses of PowerPoint); and
- Building, Civil and Environmental Engineering (pedagogical uses of PowerPoint and creative approaches to problem solving).

Between 10 and 25 full-time and part-time professors attend each of these workshops as a special event or as part of their regular departmental meeting. BCE, for example, offers them with lunch included as an opportunity for faculty to discuss new approaches to teaching and learning while building community in the department. BCE is proud to be the department in ENCS with the highest course evaluation ratings. In order to boost interest in departmental workshops, we are advertising this service in our workshop flyer and in the CTLS newsletter.

### **3.8 Special events**

Every year the CTLS holds special events that bring faculty members together to talk about teaching with colleagues from outside of Concordia. In 2004, we arranged:

- A half-day workshop on Graduate Student Supervision facilitated by Dr. Alan Wright, Associate Professor, Sciences de l'éducation, Université du Québec à Rimouski (UQAR). Dr. Wright, an active member of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE), has conducted workshops on this topic across Canada. Twenty-one faculty participated.
- Glynis Wilson Boulbee was invited to provide Narrative Skills Facilitator Training to CTLS staff and three faculty members. This was a three-day event that provided professional development for participants with a view to CTLS offering the Narrative Skills Workshop (NSW) in the future. The idea is to bring together faculty interested in developing rapport with their students through the use of stories. Our first NSW is now advertised on a cohort basis and will be co-led by one of the newly training facilitators.
- To understand better the role of faculty development in student retention, the Centre purchased a license to view a webcast of a panel discussion on teaching strategies for student retention. It was held on April 7, 2005, with seven people attending the on-site presentation and others viewing it from their office or home computers. Some of the tips discussed during the session are now available on our website. We are also participating in an administrative group, headed by Cameron Tilson and Terry Too, meeting to discuss coordinated efforts to address the problem of student retention. We are offering a series of workshops next year that will specifically address the issue.

### **3.9 Instructional skills workshop for Dawson College**

The Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) is an intensive laboratory approach to the improvement of teaching and learning. Dawson College requisitioned a three-day ISW twice this year. Ten teachers attended with similar success to previous years.

## **4 Graduate Student Support**

The teaching assistant (TA) role is important in opening a communication link between professors and students. In collaboration with the School of Graduate Studies, we offer an orientation and workshops designed specifically for new TA's. New this year has been the offering of a seminar in university teaching for PhD students.

#### **4.1 TA orientation and workshops**

Each year, TA's receive a professional development certificate after attending the CTLS TA orientation and workshop series. The event is designed to inform TA's of their rights and responsibilities, to introduce them to principles of instruction, and to provide them with some concrete tips and strategies for their new role. Nearly 200 new teaching assistants from all four Faculties attended this year's full-day orientation. Interest was so great we had to book the De Sève cinema for the morning presentations. Evaluation responses were very positive and provided us with useful feedback for next year's event.

#### **4.2 Ph.D. seminar in university teaching**

CTLS has collaborated with the School of Graduate Studies on the development of a seminar in university teaching for Ph.D. students at Concordia. The purpose of the seminar is twofold: to prepare students for an academic teaching career; and to ensure the quality of their teaching when they teach at Concordia.

Our first two seminars have just ended with thirty-four students receiving a certificate of achievement. Evaluation of both sessions was extremely positive. We are offering two more sessions in the coming Fall and another session in the Winter of 2006. One session in the Fall is specifically for Ph.D. students in Engineering and Computer Science. The Dean has given time release to an ETA in Computer Science, Nancy Acemian, who has worked closely with CTLS for the past few years, to teach the ENCS section. It will be interesting to see how she adapts the CTLS version of the seminar for Engineering students.

### **5 Online Teaching Resources**

Providing access to online teaching resources is a growing priority for the Centre. The CTLS website is an important vehicle for busy faculty members to access teaching resources at their own leisure. It is gradually developing into a showcase for promoting innovative practices and excellence in teaching at Concordia

#### **5.1 CTLS website**

The CTLS website has been redesigned to improve navigation and moved to a new directory: <http://teaching.concordia.ca>. To encourage faculty to visit the website and participate in Centre events, we are now sending out a one-page monthly newsletter to faculty who have participated in CTLS activities.

## **5.2 Faculty showcase**

The faculty showcase is an area on our web site that highlights effective and innovative examples of teaching practice. For example, how Barry Lazar (Journalism) uses music in his teaching and how Nancy Acemian (Computer Science) uses a tablet PC to record her lectures and deliver them via the web as Flash movies.

## **5.3 CTLS video series**

Production has also continued of the CTLS video series, *Teaching Dialogues*, in which professors from across the disciplines speak enthusiastically about teaching at Concordia. Five new videos were produced this year for viewing on our website:

- Real Education for the Real World: How they do it in the JMSB - Arshad Ahmad, Harold J. Simpkins
- Showing Respect for Student Learning - Gail Fayerman
- The Art in Performing Arts Education - Liselyn Adams, Anna Cappelluto, Michael Montanaro
- The Issue of Critique – David Moore, Lee Plotek
- Engaging Students in the Learning Process – Michael Montanaro

We are in the process of compiling a selection of short clips from our video collection for insertion into PowerPoint presentations for CTLS workshops. These video clips are gradually being developed into a database that will be searchable by teaching strategies and accessible via the CTLS website.

## **6 Special Projects**

### **6.1 Community-based service learning**

In the Fall of 2004, the University was invited to submit a letter of interest to participate in the McConnell Family Foundation's *National University-Based Community Service-Learning Program (NSLP)*. CTLS collaborated in writing a proposal submitted by Danielle Morin, Vice-Provost Academic Programs, for initiating and sustaining a McConnell-Concordia Service-Learning Project. It was argued in the proposal that the University has a unique tradition of responding to the needs of the larger community with innovative programming. Concordia was one of 44 universities that applied. Three universities were awarded grants; Concordia was not among them.

# APPENDIX A: PARTICIPATION IN CTLS WORKSHOPS FOR 2004-2005

2004-2005	Faculty					
Title	A&S	ENCS	FA	JMSB	Other	Total
1-Day Instructional Skills Workshop	4	1		1		6
First Day of Class	11	2		2		15
Designing Effective Library Assignments	5			2		7
5-day Course Design & Teaching Workshop	7	2	3	2		14
Web-enhanced Teaching (IITS)	9	3	5	4		21
Assessing Student Learning	6	1		2		9
Preparing Your Teaching Dossier	9			1		10
Classroom Decorum	6					6
Developing Content for Your Course Website	5		1	1		7
Critical Thinking	8		1	1	1	11
Standard American English for Non-Native Speakers	2	1		1		4
Livening Up Your Lectures	9	1		1		11
2-Day Teaching & Learning Practicum	3					3
Writing a Letter of Recommendation	1		1	2		4
Online & Accessible (OSD)	1				1	2
Assessing Student Learning		1		2		3
Technology Showcase	3	2		1	1	7
Designing Effective Research Assignments	2	2		1		5
Uses (and abuses) of PowerPoint	5		2	2		9
Graduate Student Supervision (invited guest)	9	3	1	4	4	21
Stay Up-to-date with Online Library Services	2	2			1	5
Team-based Learning	1	1		1		3
Strategic Learning (SLS)	1	3				4
Developing Questioning Skills	5			1		6
Teaching Dossier	7	1	3	1		12
Standard American English for Non-Native Speakers	3	4				7
5-Day Course Design & Teaching workshop	5	2	3		2	12
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>224</b>